Governor's Bicycle Coordinating Council
2023 Annual Report

Background

The Governor's Bicycle Coordinating Council (Council) was originally created under Governor Patrick Lucey in June 1977 and re-created by subsequent Governors including Governor Tony Evers' Executive Order #182 (January 4, 2023). The Council includes 17 members that represent the general public, the legislature, and state agencies. The Council considers all matters relating to unifying and coordinating the efforts of state agencies in encouraging the use of the bicycle as a form of transportation and recreation, promoting bicycle safety, education and regulation; promoting bicycling as a tourist and recreational activity; and disseminating information on available state and federal funding for bicycle related activities and facilities to counties and municipalities; and reviewing bicycle related programs of state agencies and making recommendations to assure a coordinated state program.

In 2023, the Council met quarterly to discuss statewide bicycling issues and various related initiatives in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors.

Council Members: Andrew Potts (Chairperson), Stephanie Bradley Wilson, Craig Heywood, Brenda Maxwell, James Miller, Scott Peterson, Jessica Wineberg, Christopher Squires representing WisDOT, Michael Schwendau representing WisDOT's Bureau of Transportation Safety, Brigit Brown representing the Secretary of WDNR, Jeff Anderson representing the Secretary of Tourism (replaced David Spiegelberg in November), Michael Morgen representing the State Superintendent of Public Instruction (filled vacant position in September), the State Department of Health Services (position vacant as of August), Senator Chris Larson (replaced Senator Melissa Agard in March) and Representative Kristina Shelton. Vacant appointments from the Wisconsin Senate and Assembly have not been filled since Senator Luther Olsen and Representative Keith Ripp left office in 2020 and 2017 respectively.

Work Activities

Work of the Council and state agencies for 2023 can be divided into the following pursuits:

Legislative Initiatives

- The Council continues to work with legislative representatives on the council and looks forward to continuing those efforts as vacant appointments are filled.
- The Council was kept informed on several legislative initiatives, including:
    - 2023 Assembly Bill 276 and 2023 Senate Bill 272: Relating to the establishment of refundable tax credits for bicycle purchases made by families with incomes that do not exceed 200% of the federal poverty line.
    - Changes in funding and state budget items that affect the construction and maintenance of bicycle facilities.
    - Legal proceedings impacting the use of eminent domain for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.
    - Bills surrounding Wisconsin's "yield state" status regarding statutory requirements at crosswalks.

State Agency Initiatives

Department of Health Services

- *Ongoing efforts to support physical activity, including bicycling:* The Council received updates on DHS initiatives and grants that promote physical activity. Areas of focus include stroke reduction, diabetes, and heart health.

Department of Natural Resources

- *Planning Projects:* The Council was appraised of the ongoing updates to the State Trails Network Plan. The update includes an interactive, publicly available map of current and planned trails throughout the state which helps trail users plan trips on DNR trails and connecting trails. The Council also received regular updates on other WDNR-led trail planning and expansion efforts, including projects on the Great Sauk Trail, Stewart Tunnel, New Glarus Woods State Park mountain biking trail, trail optimization in Peninsula State Park, state trail repairs on Douglas County, and the development of a master plan in the Central Sand Plains and Central Sand Hills Regions.
- *Events to Promote bicycling and outdoor recreation:* The Council was briefed on the OutWIGo Green event which introduced visitors to a variety of recreational activities and organizations and had over 1800 attendees.

Department of Public Instruction

- *Provide resources on safe bicycling practices:* The Council received updates on DPI's continuing efforts on driver safety education that addresses the requirements for bike/pedestrian content. The council supports and encourages joint agency efforts in educating and training on safe bicycling practices.

Department of Tourism

- *Increasing visibility of bicycling opportunities:* The Council continued to support and receive briefings on the ways in which the Department of Tourism promotes year-round bicycle tourism. Methods the Department uses to promote bicycling include providing grants to communities that promote bicycle and pedestrian related events, and advertising bicycling opportunities online and in print materials.

Department of Transportation

- *Planning Projects:* The Council received updates on the Active Transportation Plan 2050 which combines existing but outdated bicycle and pedestrian planning documents. The Council also received updates on the Multimodal Design Guide update which is underway at WisDOT and will update design guidance for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure projects.
- *Assessments of Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety:* The Council received updates on both the WisDOT Bureau of Transportation Safety and Technical Services' Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Assessment and the Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment. The Council provided comments and asked presenters questions regarding both projects during 2023 and will have the opportunity to contribute more questions and comments in 2024.
- *Ongoing Programs to Support and Promote Bicycling:* The Council received updates and promotes WisDOT programs that encourage bicycling and infrastructure investments. These programs include the Bike Buddy Program and Transportation Alternatives Program (including the TAP subprogram Safe Transportation Alternative for Rural Schools).

Successful Council Initiatives and Accomplishments

- The Council provided feedback on the needs of Wisconsin bicyclists and pedestrians for WisDOT's new Active Transportation Plan and Multimodal Design Guide update, as well as WDNR's State Trail Network Plan update.
- The Council hosted presenters from WisDOT, Traffic Analysis & Design Inc., and WDNR.
- The Council held its first meeting with an in-person option since 2019 in September.

Future Goals and Initiatives – 2024

- Stay informed on and advocate for improvements to state bicycle policies and programs.
- Explore equity in cycling and barriers to access. Support the promotion of bicycling in underrepresented communities.
- Support increased funding for bicycle infrastructure and programming.
- Support statewide bicycle planning efforts.

- Work with partners to promote Bike to School Day.
- Formalize onboarding procedures for new council members.
- Develop a Governor's Bicycle Coordinating Council website.
- Update the "Economic Impact of Bicycling in Wisconsin" report.